

# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT AND GO TO CONFESSION...

*The late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen once spoke about a flight that he had made to the West Coast. As it happened, a man who was a lapsed Catholic was seated right next to the bishop. As they got to talking, the man admitted to Sheen that he had not gone to confession in over 20 years and that he would like to try to come back to the sacraments. At this point, the Bishop said, "Fasten your seat belt you're going to confession!"*

*So Sheen heard his confession at 30,000 feet. When they got to their destination, the man met his wife who also expressed a desire for the Sacrament of Penance. The bishop took her a quiet corner of the airport and conducted the sacrament there. The place is not really important, but receiving the sacrament is.*

*This coming Monday, April 15th, we have a unique opportunity here at Saint Charles and at every Church across the Archdiocese of New York to receive the Sacrament of Penance. This Monday is called, "Reconciliation Monday." Here in the Church the priests will hear confessions from 3PM to 9PM in the evening. This is a good chance for us who have been away from the sacrament to come back and receive the Lord's pardon and peace.*

*What are the steps to making a good confession? First, we should pray for the grace to know our faults and failings. Secondly, we should examine our conscience. An examination of conscience is where we look inside and see where we might have "gone off the track" morally speaking. Recall that there are two types of sins-venial and mortal. A venial sin is an offense against God that does not totally eliminate his grace in our souls. A mortal sin is a more serious matter. A mortal sin deliberately and knowingly consented to rupture our friendship with Christ and we could go be damned for doing it-a good reason for avoiding mortal sin!*

*The third step involves the actual telling and confessing of our sins. I suppose this is the hard part, where some of us have to "fasten our seat belts" because it is never easy for us to admit our faults and failings outwardly to another human being, albeit a priest.*

*The priest will then assign us some type of a "penance." The penance more often than not, will be a prayer such as an "Our Father," or a "Hail Mary." Now the penance is to atone for our sins. Every sin we might say causes damage. The penance that we perform after confession is to "make up" for that damage!*

*Usually, we have to say the Act of Contrition in confession. Contrition means that we are sorry for our sins. We should say that prayer like we mean it. A little boy in confession once prayed the Act of Contrition this way, "O my God, I am hardly sorry for my sins." Of course, he meant "heartily!" We should have heartfelt sorrow for the sins that we commit each day.*

*Finally, the priest extends his hand and we receive absolution, the prayer of forgiveness and we are liberated from our burdens. One time at an audience, Pope Francis mentioned that he went to confession every two weeks. He probably doesn't need to! But the Pope was quoted as saying, "The confessional is not a torture chamber." No-it is not a torture chamber! Rather, it is a place of healing, peace and light. If it's been some time since your last confession, come to the Church on Reconciliation Monday!*

Sincerely,  
Father Jerome